



News Release

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Burbank Irrigation District 4 issues bottled-water advisory *Walla Walla County utility's project expected to last about a month*

OLYMPIA — People in Burbank Irrigation District 4, Walla Walla County, are being advised to drink bottled water, effective today. The bottled-water advisory was issued because a significant maintenance project will cause the district to rely on a well with nitrate levels that exceed safe drinking water standards.

Nitrate is a chemical found in most fertilizers, manure and liquid waste from septic tanks. It can leach into soil and contaminate drinking water supplies. Elevated nitrate levels pose a health risk to infants and pregnant women, as well as people with a rare blood enzyme disorder, because it reduces the ability of red blood cells to carry oxygen. While older children and adults rapidly recover, infants can be severely harmed.

The district needs to shut down one of its two wells so it can do maintenance work on a water reservoir. This well meets all drinking water standards; the one that will remain working does not meet the standard for nitrates. Because both wells are needed to meet water demand, the district is asking customers to conserve water by refraining from watering lawns and gardens. When both wells are operating, the district mixes the water together to dilute the nitrate and provide safe drinking water.

The project is expected to last about four weeks. The advisory will remain in effect during that time. Dan Hultgrenn, secretary for the irrigation district, predicts there could be brief disruptions in water service.

The district serves a little more than 200 homes and a dozen businesses on the western edge of the community of Burbank, near the Columbia River. It includes the area east of and including

Second Avenue, north of Humorist Road, west of the Columbia School District, and south of and including Poplar Street.

Water with high nitrate can be used for bathing and other household uses, but susceptible people should not drink it or cook with it. Boiling does not remove nitrate from water; in fact, it can concentrate the chemical, making the problem worse.

The irrigation district will supply bottled water to customers who request it.

The district staff will test the water daily for nitrate. The state Department of Health's Office of Drinking Water will closely monitor the results. Once the maintenance work is complete and the district can resume its blending technique, the health advisory will be canceled and customers will be notified.

"We appreciate the patience of our customers as we undertake this important maintenance project," Hultgrenn said. "We're taking every precaution to make sure we're protecting their health."

Customers who have questions may contact the Irrigation District at 509-302-5694.

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Visit the Washington Department of Health website at http://www.doh.wa.gov for <i>a healthy dose of information</i> .
